

Appl. No. 10/766,846
Amdt. Dated April 12, 2005
Reply to Office Action of February 23, 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-4 (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) An apparatus incorporating potted hollow fibre membranes, the apparatus having,

a) a solid mass of a potting material having a first face;

b) a plurality of hollow fibre membranes sealed in the potting material;

and,

c) terminal portions of the hollow fibre membranes adjacent open ends of the membranes protruding from the first face,

wherein,

d) the solid mass of potting material extends to and adhesively secures to the inner periphery of a permeate collection means to form a permeate collection zone;
and,

e) the open-ended terminal portions of the hollow fibre membranes protrude into the permeate collection zone

The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the permeate collection means further comprises walls enclosing a plenum adjacent to the permeate collection zone into which plenum a gas may be introduced.

6. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 5 further comprising an air tube passing through the potting material, the air tube having a first end protruding from a second face of the potting material from which the membranes extend and a second end in communication with the plenum.

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7. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the potting material extends to and adhesively secures to the air tube.

8. (Currently Amended) An apparatus incorporating potted hollow fibre membranes, the apparatus having,

a) a solid mass of a potting material having a first face;

b) a plurality of hollow fibre membranes sealed in the potting material;

and,

c) terminal portions of the hollow fibre membranes adjacent open ends of the membranes protruding from the first face,

wherein,

d) the solid mass of potting material extends to and adhesively secures to the inner periphery of a permeate collection means to form a permeate collection zone; and,

e) the open-ended terminal portions of the hollow fibre membranes protrude into the permeate collection zone

~~The apparatus of claim 4~~ further comprising an air tube, the air tube passing through the potting material, the air tube having a first end protruding from a second face of the potting material from which the membranes extend and a second end in communication with a plenum or manifold into which air may be introduced, the interior of the plenum or manifold being distinct from the permeate collection zone.

9. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein the potting material extends to and adhesively secures to the air tube.